

YOUTH NEWSLETTER

LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION/YOUTH DESK

No. 24 June 1988



(Photo: WCC-Visual Arts Section)

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E D I T O R I A L

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Let your light shine before men,
that they may see your good deeds
and praise your Father in heaven

Matthew 5:16

Dear Sister/Brother in Christ,

I know that many of us hate to impress people. If we should do something only in order to show our achievements, politeness and reliability, then our motivation would really be very low. This is probably even more true the younger we are. We hate doing things only in order to collect good points.

In some of the contributions in this issue of our Youth Newsletter we will be able to read about some activities which were not motivated by a desire to impress anybody. The motivation simply was the need for more sharing in the community of youth on the international level, more unity of effort and more use of the widely spread gifts given to the youth by our Lord. The motivation behind these actions was finally that there would be more peace in heart, more peace in the families, in the villages and cities, in the country, regions and the world. Peace is an attribute of the same Kingdom in the service of which the youth have been called together with many others. Peace symbolizes that a high amount of justice between people and God has been established.

In this issue we have a few examples of youth activities in which the youth took initiatives in the preparatory process and offered what they had at their disposal, so that a new chance, new steps in an important direction could be taken. These activities were not meant only to appear that their contribution be visible for the eyes of those who like to judge and evaluate. Especially, I think of the II. Central American Congress of the Lutheran youth which was prepared in the region by youth representatives and which again offered an opportunity for a larger number of youth while only humble funding was necessary.

The light which is finally visible in some of the international activities is the commitment of some real but unmentioned Christians in the preparation and the activity itself as well as in the follow-up process. All this has been conducted in the strong faith in the one who blesses all good attempts, our Lord Jesus Christ. As you now read some of the reports, we wish that a similar thing which is described in the above quoted word of Jesus Christ will happen to you. We wish that you will praise our Father in heaven for all that He has given to our churches through the committed youth. If you are not able to see this light in the case of youth activities (regardless of whether or not it is described in this issue, or whether it was an international youth event or an ordinary effort of your local youth group, known only to you and your friends) your question "WHY it is not possible?" will certainly lead you to further interesting and useful discoveries...

Yours, Julius

NOTES FROM OUR DESK

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Since the last issue of our Youth Newsletter, the Youth Desk has been involved in the following activities:

1. A Caribbean Lutheran Youth Convocation was organized prior to the Caribbean Lutheran Conference on November 8-13, 1987 in Puerto Rico - the report with a lot of pictures is included in this issue. The youth meeting was sponsored by the LWF.
2. A preparatory meeting for the Consultation of Christian Youth networks on the support of the Helsinki Process was organized and hosted by the LWF/DCC Youth Desk in Geneva on January 11-13, 1988 (see item 4 and report on page 31).
3. The II. Central American Lutheran Youth Congress was held in Guatemala on January 24-29, 1988 with about 140 participants. Parts of the reports of the three LWF delegates from other regions (FRG, USA and Norway) are included. The meeting was sponsored by Bread for the World (FRG), the German National Committee of the LWF and our Youth Program.
4. Three LWF delegates attended a meeting of the Christian youth networks on the support of the Helsinki Process, which took place in Bad Dürkheim, FRG on March 20-24, 1988.
5. The Commission on Church Cooperation met in Kyoto, Japan on April 8-15, 1988. Reports about the 1987 LWF Youth and Students Program were received by the CCC and progress reports for 1988 and plans for 1989 were approved.

For 1989 the following activities were suggested:

- two regional youth seminars on Youth and Worship in Asia and Europe;
- visitation program in Eastern Europe;
- two internships aiming at the preparation of the next LWF Assembly and the new Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering (PAYG) in January 1990;
- preparation of the PAYG - meetings of the Ad hoc Youth Committee;
- other regular programs of the Youth Desk.

The CCC suggested to the Executive Committee that at the next LWF Assembly 20% of all delegates should be youth and that the continuity of the Youth and Students Program should be secured after the term of the present coordinator of the Youth Desk expires (the term was renewed through the Assembly 1990 by the LWF Officers last year).

- An Ad hoc Youth Committee was established with the following composition:

1. Maria Leijman from Sweden
2. Heidi Gengenbach from Canada
3. Claudia Voigt from Brazil
4. Shalem Raju from India
5. Jesse Lutabingwa from Tanzania
6. We are still expecting one name from the German Democratic Republic.

At the present time we are implementing the following activities:

1. A youth visitation program to Malawi and Zimbabwe for the participants of the African Lutheran Youth Leaders conference on May 3-10, 1988;
2. The African Lutheran Youth Leaders Conference was held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe on May 10-21, 1988 with about 45 participants;
3. A follow-up seminar on the European Seminar on Youth and Spirituality is planned for Denmark in the fall of 1988;
4. A first meeting of the Ad hoc Youth Committee will be held in September in Geneva;
5. A European Lutheran Youth Gathering with about 60 participants is planned for Bratislava, CSSR, for September 30 - October 10, 1988. We are presently expecting nominations from the invited member churches.

For the immediate future the following internships have to be decided on:

1. An internship with the General Secretariat of the LWF-Assembly Office, length: 9 months in 1989; knowledge of both English and German; basic theological education is required as the program of the internship will be dedicated to the preparation of the next LWF Assembly. Applications, endorsed by the leadership of the LWF member church, can be sent to the Youth Desk (selection will be done in September 1988);
2. An internship with the LWF Youth Desk, length: 11 months; approximate period: April 1, 1989 - February 28, 1990; purpose: to assist in the preparation of the Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering planned for January 1990 in Brazil. Requirements: as generally for youth internships plus secretarial skills (e.g. typewriting, computer...). Applications can be sent to the Youth Desk and will be evaluated in September 1988.

We have the following material which you can receive free of charge upon request from our Desk: (The materials are mostly meant to be resource materials for youth leaders but can also be edifying for anybody committed to youth work)

1. A report on the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering, held in Jerusalem on August 2-16, 1987, with 60 pages (produced by the LWF Youth Desk this year);
2. Guides for the planning of youth work (produced by the American Lutheran Church-ALC) for 1986/87 and 1987/88.

An important note:

You are receiving the Youth Newsletter free of charge (as some of the LWF member churches regularly contribute to our program) and we plan to continue to offer it in such a way also in the future. However, if you would like to express your appreciation for it and help to cover its production costs, we would like to inform you that the printing costs for one issue is an average of USD 2. In addition we also pay for the mailing costs to your home, and staff related costs connected with the Youth Newsletter. In 1987 we produced three issues. If you would like to send us a voluntary contribution, please transfer it to one of the following accounts with the indication: "Youth & Students Program/Youth Newsletter, acc. (30)310.902":

Banque Scandinave en Suisse

Cours de Rive 11
Case Postale 901
CH-1211 Geneva 3
Switzerland

Account Numbers LWF:

620033/11 (for transfer of Swiss Francs)
620033/61 (for transfer of US Dollars)

Schröder, Münchmeyer, Hengst & Co. Bank

Friedensstrasse
Postfach 4387
D-6000 Frankfurt
Germany

Account Number LWF:

00-843 037-00 (for transfer of Deutch Mark)

One more important note:

It seems probable that the next Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering (PAYG) in January 1990 will be organized (pending approval of the suggestion of the Standing Committee on the Assembly preparation in the next Executive Committee meeting in Addis Ababa). We want you to reflect in your youth groups on this great opportunity for the youth of our federation and let us know your suggestions for the theme of the PAYG, subthemes, issues which should be given attention, to the form of the meeting... It would be good if we could receive your reaction by September 1988. Thanks!

For your information: the four main areas of concern for the next Assembly will be: 1. Mission, evangelism, re-evangelism; 2. Communion and Unity; 3. Justice and Peace; 4. Creation.

* * * * *

TESTIMONY

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of Afrizal Munah from Indonesia

I am the Way, the Truth
and the Life. No one
comes to the Father
but by Me.

John 14:6

I come from a Muslim family, and my father is a well known 'ulama' (= elder or teacher) in the Province of Riau. He is the chairman of the Council of Muslim Elders in Pekanbaru. In my family I am the youngest of three children.

I was brought up in the Islamic Faith. But when I entered University, I became thirsty for religious literature which would satisfy my soul. I began to read not only the Koran, but any religious books, or 'holy' books, and to study them one by one, regardless of which religion they represented.

One day I came across a verse in the 'Hadith' (= collected sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) which said:

"On the Last Day a priest (the term used is IMAM MAHDI, which can be translated MESSIAH) shall come down to the earth". From then on I began to try and find out who this priest, or Messiah is. I went to a lot of trouble to learn from the educated Muslim priests (ulama), and at last I discovered that the 'Imam Mahdi' was a prophet, Isa Almasih.

After this, I wanted to know more about this prophet and about his life, so I began to read the Old Testament. But I did not find Him there, because it spoke only of a Messiah who was to come. Day after day passed and I was full of questions. One day I decided to ask a friend of mine who is a Christian. He was able to explain many things to me, so that I became even more eager to find out about Jesus. At last, one day, I plucked up courage to say to my parents that the Way of Salvation was in the hands of the prophet Isa Almasih. But my parents and my whole family would not accept this and they supposed that I was mad.

After this my life seemed empty for a long time, but the next year my desire to search for eternal life grew strong again. One day, as I was on my way home from my classes at the University, I found myself walking aimlessly, not knowing where I was going. But my steps took me to the biggest church in Pekanbaru, the Roman Catholic Church of Saint Mary. As I looked at the images of Mary and the Cross, my heart became calm and my thoughts cool in my mind. During the following months I wanted to attend a service in that church. On the Sunday when the opportunity to attend a service came, I felt in my heart the joy of living in the love of Christ. The next week I attended the service again, and this time the Pastor gave me a Bible. I received it with Joy, because I could now study more about the life of the Lord Jesus.

But when I returned home, I found that I had been seen by a member of my family. My punishment was very heavy: I was to be kept shut up in my room

for a year because, according to my parents, I had become mentally/spiritually ill; I had gone mad! I scarcely felt the days and the months passing, when after six months my punishment was made even more severe. My parents tried to kill me by cutting my throat with a knife. As a result of this attempt, I had to spend three months in hospital, and I had to bear the cost of the treatment myself. Nevertheless, I prayed in the name of the Lord Jesus, and my prayers were answered so that I recovered. But before I was completely well (the marks of the wounds can still be seen on my neck), I was returned to imprisonment in my room.

One day I was able to escape from my imprisonment with the help of a friend. I climbed through the window of my room on November 25, 1985, at 3.30 in the morning. I ran away with only the clothes I was wearing, and set off in order to find the faithful love of the Lord Jesus. I was determined to follow the way of Jesus. I walked for about 12 days without eating, drinking only the water from the drain at the side of the road, until at last, with the help of a member of the GKPI, I came to the town of Aek-Kanopan. After this the GKPI minister at Aek-Kanopan, Rev. H. Pakpahan, brought me to the GKPI office in Pematangsiantar, where I was received kindly by the church leaders. When I explained the reasons for my flight, and that I wanted to be a Christian, I was offered a place to live in the GKPI orphanage 'Mamre', and I have been staying there until now.

I would like you to know that it is my great desire to become a servant of the Lord, and to work in His field. And I would like to ask you to pray for me, and in this way help me to achieve my ambition.

I have written this testimony so that my fellow Christians will know what has happened to me and what I hope to do.

May we all rejoice in our eternal salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ.



ONCE MORE: Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering in Jerusalem,
August 2 - 16, 1988

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"A new challenge to the living faith"

The following is the final part of Kristin Anderson Ostrom's, (USA) report about her participation in the above mentioned gathering:

JUST A PERSONAL NOTE:

In addition to all that I learned about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the church within Asia and the many concerns of the youth of Asia, and the Holy Land, the conference became for me one of the most spiritually intense times of my life.

My experience living on the Israeli occupied territory with Lutheran Arab Palestinians and with other members of the faith, most from third world countries, most who had converted to Christianity as young adults against the will of their families and cultures, was in itself a conversion experience - a turning around and of healing.

I am a wealthy American. I have everything I need, physically, emotionally, mentally, materially. In general, I live as if God does not exist. My thoughts, actions, the rationale for my decisions have little to do with the God of history that I proclaim each Sunday morning. God, what God? I don't feel his presence on a day to day basis. A God that intervenes in history - where, how? As Hans Schwarz writes in **What Christians Believe**, "most people need God only in times of crisis when they are unable to find a solution. Even practicing Christians tend to relegate God to the Sunday morning service. In doing this our vision of God becomes hazy. God is reduced to a fringe phenomenon in our lives, and hardly gives us new impulses for daily life." My experience of God is hazy, very hazy. And thank goodness "faith" and "God" are topics that - even when brought up with good friends - are generally left out there in the area of phenomenon and relativity. "We live as if God did not exist," and I think in America in the 1980's we can easily add to Dietrich Bonhoeffer's sentence, "and in a world where we've pledged our honor to relativity which works to extinguish our search for the infinite."

We have been taught, as Allan Bloom asserts in **The Closing of the American Mind**, to be good liberally educated Americans which is to say that we are to respect an honor relativity above all else. Everyone's experience of God is different and that is OK - so goes the innocuous common wisdom about the infinite.

But we must trust something, and I generally place my trust, as I would suspect most upper-middle-income-mainline-Christians in the United States place their trust, in the Michelob beer commercial: "You can have it all!" You can have a successful career, money, power, influence, fun, happiness, a beautiful home, children, etc. Even while I know that it is not necessarily God's will that I have whatever I deem necessary for myself - I live as if it were true.

As Schwarz states, we find substitutes for God. And as Tillich argues, we all have faith or trust in something. Every person has an ultimate

concern - that which influences and undergirds one's thoughts words, and deeds. And I have recently come to learn that my ultimate concern has been "perfection." But I am discovering that my lord of "perfection" is not a kind of loving god. It demands and demands and demands.

I am a wealthy American. I have everything I need - physically, emotionally, mentally, materially. I really am not in need of anything - except perhaps the need to fulfill the demands of my lord of "perfection."

"How hard it is for the wealthy to enter the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Kingdom of God." (Luke 18: 24-25)

"How blest are those who **know their need of God**; the kingdom of Heaven is theirs."
(Matthew 5: 3)

I had begun to crumble under the demands of my lord of "perfection" and had begun to be confronted with the fact that I live somewhat like a contemporary pharisee - when I traveled to Israel for the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering.

Most of the delegates at the conference were from third world countries, most had converted to Christianity as adults against the wishes of their families and cultures. They were coming from cultures with many needs - food, shelter, political stability, human rights - especially for women, and freedom from persecution and war.

On one of the first days of the conference I was hit with having to listen to the first testimonial from a Christian that I had ever heard. I had been asked to lead the prayer at the end of this small group session and was therefore silently and a bit pridefully crafting a prayer in my head using my native tongue - half listening to Munah begin to tell his story. But as I began to hear this young man from Indonesia tell about his quest to quench his spiritual thirst, the grace that he experienced as he heard of and read about Jesus Christ, and his battle against his parents and community, in his broken English - my silent pride wilted. He told us how his parents imprisoned him in his own house, accusing him of mental illness when he spoke to them of Jesus Christ. He showed us the deep scar under his chin where his parents, his parents, sliced his throat attempting to kill him.

Munah had a need that was filled with the saving words of Jesus Christ. Those words that are generally meaningless to me, those phrases that cause my eyes to glaze over and my mind to wander, were words of freedom for Munah. And in a strange sense they became freeing words for me as well. I was numb when he finished his testimony. But in that particular moment I felt a sense of strength - a new found strength to be intimate with some participants at the conference- to share my weak and young faith and to learn from them. I saw the salvation of Jesus Christ in them. And, as I was confronted with places of need and opportunities where I would be of service to individual people and to the work of the conference, I discovered a new strength to let go of my need to do things perfectly and instead to simply serve the needs I perceived.

Similar incidents - on a smaller scale occurred throughout the conference. The gathering provided me with an opportunity to begin to understand the love of Christ through many of the relationships that were developed with other participants. Within this community of believers - this body of Christ - phrases and words that were without meaning before became alive with new meaning.

At the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering I witnessed the expressed faith of many of our Christian brothers and sisters who live in the third world. Their faith was wholly and utterly different than mine. Their faith was real and alive, and it somehow gave me new life. I know this sounds unsophisticated to our worldly ears, but it is true that I experienced the community - the body of believers - unlike I ever have in the institutional church in the United States of America.

And I sense that their faith was alive because **they needed God**. The **needed to trust** that God would be victorious in the end; they needed the word of salvation and of hope for the future. My brothers and sisters living in the third world understand the need to trust beyond the finite. Their finite world of hunger, political instability and persecution provides no hope, no comfort. They need to cling to the hope and promise of Jesus Christ.

There seems to be an inherent problem for contemporary wealthy Americans in entering the kingdom of Heaven. By definition, we believe that we have no needs; we do not need God. We are sinful human beings, but we live in a culture that continually calls us to worship the finite. In addition, our institutional mainline churches have not done a very good job to help us define and understand the intimate within our scientific world-view.

The faith that I witnessed while in Israel is radically different than mine - and it continues to confront my denial of my need for a God outside of my control and my clinging to perfection. And as Jesus heightened the Law when confronting the Pharisees of his time - so too do the contemporary pharisees need to be confronted with the words of Jesus, the Law of God, the Heightened Law.

Perhaps we, as wealthy Americans, need to be shaken into realizing that we are needy people. While there is both Law and Gospel...the Law must come before the Gospel. The Law drives one to seek Christ through its indictment.

I am so utterly grateful for the opportunity to witness the faith of my brothers and sisters in Asia. The Spirit is alive in them. I am thankful that I was shaken up enough to begin to acknowledge the Spirit dwelling within and pray that I can continue to grow in my faith and understanding of this God of history and his promise of victory over the finite.

I want to thank the Lutheran Church in America, and the Lutheran World Federation for providing me the opportunity to gather together with other young people within the Lutheran church at the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering in Beit Jala. I am truly thankful!

* * * * *

YOUTH CONVOCATION AND CARIBBEAN LUTHERAN CONFERENCE
=====

November 8 - 13, 1987

by Satie Ricknauth, Guyana

"Come now let us reason together"
Is. 1:18

The Youth Convocation in Puerto Rico brought together for the first time in history many Lutheran young people of the Caribbean. We were given the wonderful opportunity of gathering internationally. Previously when the Caribbean Lutheran Conference (C.L.C.) was held only one youth representative was present from each participating territory.

The LWF Youth Desk took the lead in sponsoring a meeting of a Planning Committee which met in August 1987 in Trinidad & Tobago. This meeting was coordinated by Susan Pursch (of the Youth Ministry staff of the Lutheran Church in America) and there were youth representatives and pastors from Suriname, the Caribbean Synod of LCA (Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands) and Guyana. Eight of us met in an upper room at the Kapok Hotel where, despite cultural, socio-political and economic differences, we were drawn closer together in love and unity of the Holy Spirit. We studied together the theme of the forthcoming C.L.C. - "From Shore to Shore the Holy Spirit at Work".

With the presence and help of the Holy Spirit working through us in that upper room a Purpose Statement was formulated and an exciting program for the Youth Convocation was planned:

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To enable the participants to:

- a) meet, know and appreciate each other
- b) make conscious and strengthen their sense of Lutheran identity
- c) worship together
- d) study the theme of the conference from the viewpoint of youth and how it applies to their lives
- e) participate in the Fifth Assembly of the C.L.C.

On Sunday, November 8, 1987 twelve youth delegates, other participants and visitors assembled at Camp Magayo, Puerto Rico. There were Lutherans from Guyana, Suriname, one from Miami, South Africa, Czechoslovakia (Rev. Julius Filo), Philadelphia (Susan Pursch), two from Puerto Rico and disappointingly none from the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The camp site was located in a beautiful hilly countryside and the weather was all sunshine. Since the group was small everyone got acquainted quickly.

The first morning devotion was led by the Guyanese. Following that, the highlight of the day was an interesting and challenging presentation on the "Current Message of the Augsburg Confession" made by Dr. Julius Filo. He spoke on several sub-headings:

- a) to preserve the Unity
- b) to keep our witness to the Gospel true
- c) to be witnesses through good examples.

He prepared four challenging questions which we discussed in small groups.

Group 1 answered to question:

1. What should be renewed in our witness to the Gospel in our congregations and churches?

in the following way:

Our witness to society should be renewed so that it is a total witness - not just in the church but outside of the church so that others are made aware that we serve out of love for God and faith and not because we are afraid of what would happen to us if we would not do good. Example - at funerals we hear people say he was a good man. He always had a kind word for everyone, he liked to share, etc. I am sure he must be with God now. We also said that our faith and love for God should enable us to show our appreciation and gratitude for Him in the things we do and say in the ways we treat others and in our way of living. For our witness to become effective, we need to be more evangelical. Lutherans need to witness in a variety of ways - including activities in services in church and communities. In the past there were conflicts between adults and youth in South Africa, but now they are given the opportunity to learn and witness in practical ways - caring for the needy, raising funds to help others.

and to question:

2. How can the youth bring an authentic witness about the true faith?

in the following way:

1. Being an example
2. Letting others know that you care - invite them to your activities
3. to visit them (others)
4. to witness all the time wherever you are - while playing games, at school, at the working place
5. to know what is the true faith, to know what you believe in; you should be able to talk about it
6. to try to get to know and understand the persons whom you witness to - and to make them feel comfortable
7. You need to be inspired and enthusiastic yourself before you can inspire others and bring them to God.

Group 2 answered the question:

1. What should be renewed in our service to the people and countries of our region?

in the following way:



Working groups
1 and 2



- (A) Economically. The church should be more effective in sharing; not only spiritually, but also physically (e.g. food, clothes, etc.) with the people who are in need, not with the purpose of bringing everyone we share with to the church, but to do so in the name of God.
- (B) Education for Conscientization. Seminars should be given to inform youth about present realities in the world (e.g. drugs, alcohol, unwanted pregnancies, etc.). The church should be the front line in dealing with problems that affect people's lives.
- (C) Communication between churches from one country to another. Exchange of youth between Guyana and Suriname because they are neighbors and exchange of more visits should be planned.

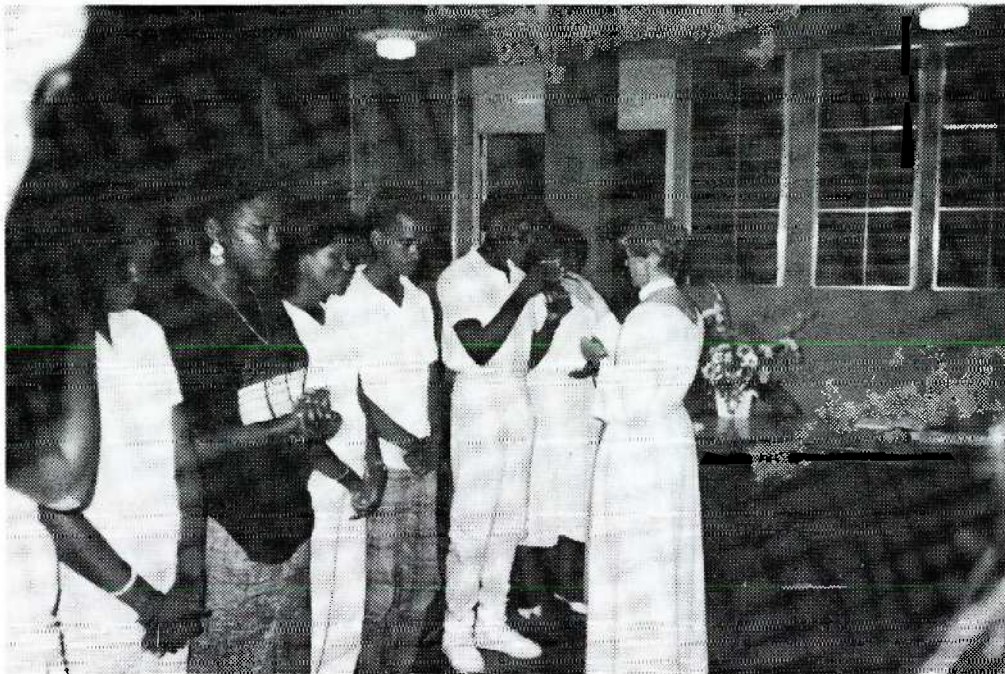
and to question:

2. What can be a specific contribution of the youth in order to be faithful to our spiritual heritage?

in the following way:

There are two possible contributions:

- (1) On October 31 (Martin Luther's Day) Lutheran youth in individual countries should meet in their own countries in a general assembly to teach the Augsburg Confession and other related matters highlighting our Lutheran heritage.
- (2) Youth should become more active in the spreading of the word of God; namely, through evangelistic programs. Teach people, especially youth, to uphold the spiritual heritage that is given to them.



Celebration of the Holy Communion during the Youth Convo

A sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit at work from shore to shore could be seen in the joyful and increased fellowship which grew in the course of the youth gathering. Much of the purpose statement was achieved as we participated in worship, the study of the Augsburg Confession, morning exercise, cultural evening and social activities. During our discussions we shared with one another our concerns and the problems of our countries.

It was necessary to meet separately as a group of youth during the Assembly of the C.L.C. since the time for the Youth Convocation was limited. The youth expressed the need to cooperate in and to share the activities and resources of neighboring countries. The following resolutions were adopted by the Youth and passed on to the C.L.C. Continuation Committee to be implemented:

Whereas the Caribbean Lutheran Conference has demonstrated its interest in the Youth of the region by providing for a Youth Convocation, and

Whereas the Celebration of the Caribbean Lutheran Conference Youth Convocation raises the consciousness of youth about other Caribbean Lutherans, and

Whereas the Celebration of the Caribbean Lutheran Conference Youth Convocation enables young people to see how the church works, and

Whereas the Celebration of the Caribbean Lutheran Conference Youth Convocation established important ties for future church cooperation, and

Whereas a Youth Convocation provides youth and adults with a forum for interaction and exchange of ideas on Lutheran beliefs and practices, and

Whereas the participation of youth is limited by their school terms, and

Whereas it is important to keep building on the bases established by the first Caribbean Lutheran Conference Youth Convocation;

Therefore,

Be it resolved that the next assembly of the Caribbean Lutheran Conference include a Youth Convocation, and

Be it resolved that the Continuation Committee provide for the selection of a Youth Planning Committee and the appointment of a Coordinator, and

Be it resolved that the Youth Convocation be celebrated for at least three (3) days not including travel prior to the conference, and

Be it resolved that the next Caribbean Lutheran Conference Youth Convocation be a leadership training event to move toward the goal of a Youth Continuation Committee, and

Be it resolved that the Caribbean Lutheran Conference consider moving the time for the conference to the month of August to accommodate the youth, and

Be it further resolved that the Continuation Committee submit a preliminary budget request on the basis of the attached budget to the sponsoring committees before January, 1988 so that the necessary funding can be available.

We, the participants, would like to thank Susan Pursch of the LCA and Dr. Julius Filo of the LWF Youth Desk for making the Youth Convocation a reality and a success. We are sincerely grateful for the privilege of being participants of the first Caribbean Lutheran Youth Convocation. We see the Youth Convocation as a wonderful and worthwhile experience and hope that it will be continued.

Immediately after the Youth Convocation, we moved from the camp to the Hotel La Ceiba to participate in the Fifth Assembly of the C.L.C. About 25 adults and 13 youth participated. There were delegates from Lutheran churches in Suriname, Guyana, the Caribbean Synod of LCA and other visitors and invited persons from Jamaica, Switzerland and Chile.

The theme "The Holy Spirit at Work from Shore to Shore" was studied during morning devotions and was reflected upon during discussions.

Several dynamic and challenging presentations were made during the C.L.C. which led to extensive and intensive discussions and thought. Presentations were made on the following topics:



Display of Surnimane
during CLC - raised a
lot of attention



The Guyanese youth group
also prepared an outspoken
display

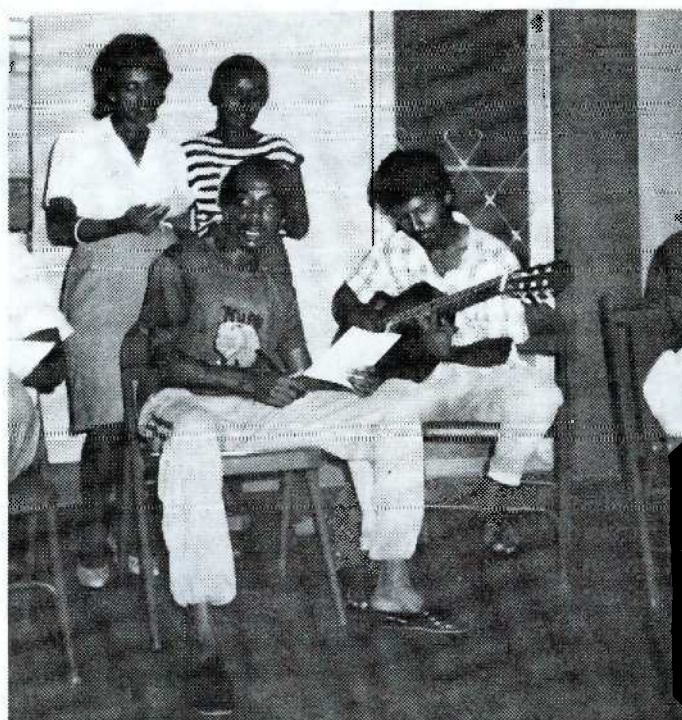
1. "Evangelism & Service in the Caribbean Context"
by Dr. Allan Kirton
2. "A Lutheran Understanding of the Holy Spirit"
by Rev. José D. Rodriguez
3. "Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry in the Caribbean Context"
by Dr. Phillip Potter
4. "The Role of Women in the Lutheran Ministry in the Caribbean"
by Rev. Judith Spindt

Reports were presented by outgoing officers of the Continuation Committee. We assisted in the collecting and counting of ballots during the election of the new Continuation Committee, of which Rev. Michael Jagessar of Guyana was elected chairman. There were also progress reports from member churches - Suriname, Guyana and The Caribbean Synod of LCA, from which we were able to learn of some of the difficulties (economic, political, social & cultural) facing our brothers and sisters in other regions.

The youth also presented a report which included songs learned during the Convocation, territory reports of youth work and activities in member countries, discussion on the Augsburg Confession and other activities of the Youth Convocation.



Contributing with
a song to CLC



A song from Guyana

The new Constitution and By-laws were presented to the C.L.C. Assembly for discussion. After careful scrutiny and much dialogue, necessary changes were made and adopted.

The delegates prepared a list of resolutions which was passed on to the Continuation Committee of the C.L.C. to be implemented.



Meeting of participants with Dr. Phillip Potter during CLC

INTRODUCTION

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of Gisela von Heusinger, LWF Youth Intern

As a journalist I am used to write about people and facts. However, to write about myself...?

Nevertheless, I will give you some information about myself: Gisela von Heusinger, at present one of the youth interns at the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva. Coming from the northern part of the Federal Republic of Germany, I started traveling (in many cases by bicycle) in Europe at an early age since I am very interested in other people, countries and cultures. After I finished school, I worked as a nurse and went to Mexico and Guatemala for three months, before I started studying. This first visit to Latin America determined my special interest in this continent.

My studies could be called 'studium generale': theology, philosophy, history and sociology of Latin America, Spanish, music and social medicine in Bielefeld-Bethel, Berlin and Hamburg, FRG. I graduated in theology two years ago, taking the 'theological examination' and 'diploma of theology' at the University of Hamburg.

Due to the high rate of unemployment in the FRG, which also affects the church, there is no chance of getting a job as a woman pastor in my church, or in any other church. Taking courses in journalism, I started on a second profession, thereby working for the church in a secular society and its mass media.

In 1986/87 I worked as the editor of a private broadcasting company in Hannover, FRG.

My first extensive contact with the ecumenical movement was through a job at the Ecumenical Institute Bossey, Switzerland, last year, where I was responsible for the Ecumenical Learning Program with the visitors- and seminar groups. I am very happy that I now have a chance of becoming better acquainted with the Federation's work, its function and the role it plays within the ecumenical movement.

I spent the first months in the Women's Office gathering information and data on the LWF Women's history and writing a report. I have now joined the Department of Communications, where I work for the Lutheran World Information (lwi), a weekly news service. As a journalist I am glad to have this opportunity of combining religious and secular journalism. It is of particular importance that the reporting on LWF activities in the media be intensified, since there is a declining interest of the media in the church and the contribution it makes to society in the form of specific programs and projects etc.

Gisela von Heusinger

YOUTH LEADERS CONFERENCE

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in Jyväskylä, Finland in January 1988

by Kalle Elonheimo

The annual youth leaders conference of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland was held in January in Jyväskylä, Finland. Until 1985 the conference used to take place in the Luther Folk High School and Educational Center in Järvenpää, but as the number of participants grew, it became necessary to organize it in bigger cities. This year there were some 700 youth leaders taking part in the conference. Most of the participants were professional youth leaders and youth deacons from local congregations. In addition there were also youth pastors and employees of several Christian youth organizations.

There were two main purposes for the conference: first it was a place to get new ideas for the work. Secondly it was a possibility to meet colleagues from different parts of the country. This kind of meeting place is especially important for youth leaders in small rural parishes.

The program of the conference varies from year to year. There are both large happenings where all participants gather - services, concerts and plenary sessions - and smaller workshops. Every year there are also some international programs or some guests from abroad.

The theme of the conference was "You Will Find". It was an encouragement to go to young people and not just to wait for them to come to church. A study about attitudes of young adults up to the age of 30 was

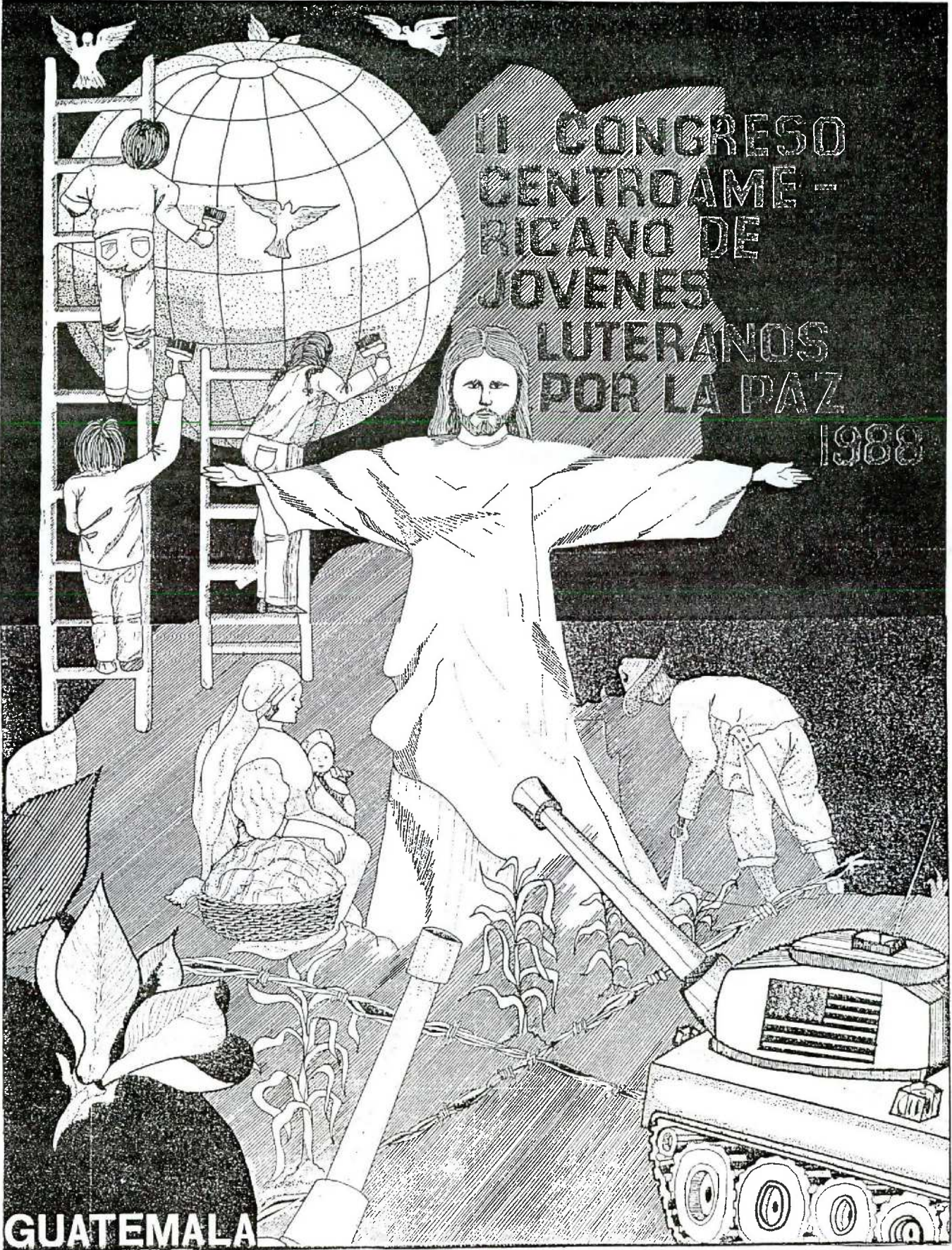
introduced to give youth leaders a picture of the reality young people live in. According to the study, young adults have only few, if any, values in their lives. Most of them e.g. belong to the church, but the Christian faith is not at all important for them. The purpose of the life is for many just to live from day to day. The picture given was rather dark - but real for a western country. It is a challenge to the church to find a way to these people and to give them a meaning in their lives.

The workshops or study groups tried to find ways. They dealt with questions of the every-day work of youth leaders - how to use the time, the contacts and the means that are available. Confirmation schools, children and teenager clubs, open door nights, etc. are among the already existing possibilities. The Finnish youth leaders can also without problems visit schools to conduct morning devotions and religious instruction.

The speech of Dr. Julius Filo gave an interesting contrast to the Finnish situation. He told about church youth work in a socialistic society, where it is already an act of testimony to belong to a church. In Finland it is rather to leave the church that tells something about one's conviction.

REPORT ON II. CENTRAL AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS IN GUATEMALA

on January 24 - 29, 1988



PART I - Monika Drewes

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(Monika Drewes is the new assistant pastor in Dankelshausen, FRG. After her internship with the LWF Youth Desk she spent 1,5 years in Mexico and Central America voluntarily assisting in projects of the churches. She participated in the above congress on behalf of the LWF Youth Desk.)

The Second Latin American Youth Congress had the same theme as the first one which took place nearly two years ago, namely "Peace": "After Jesus Christ let us opt for peace and justice in the crisis situation Central America is experiencing". The delegations from Honduras, El Salvador, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Guatemala met on January 24-29, 1988 near the capital city of Guatemala in a youth camp on Lake Amatitlan. They all came from very different social backgrounds and groups. There were farmers/peasants, workers, students, employees (within their own countries, Honduras or El Salvador), expelled persons, refugees, Latin Americans and Indians. In addition there were representatives of the LWF, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in FRG, the Lutheran Student Movement in the USA and the Ecumenical Council of Churches in Latin America. Many well-known faces from the first congress and also many new ones - all together 140 participants - came to jointly pose questions, to discuss, to consider, to pray, to sing, to experience communion together and to summon up courage as Christians to face the menace to peace in Central America.

The planning for this congress was entirely in the hands of the youth themselves. A coordination team selected during the first congress two years ago was in charge of the organization, the structural content and selected lecturers. In the style of the congress they followed the model used by the different pastors in the preparation of the first congress. Therefore, the sequence of the congress was as follows: lectures, discussions in small groups and compilation of documents in the plenary. As can be seen from the set goals, the youth dealt with many issues:

1. we want to achieve that the youth in Central America concretizes their responsibility for the proclamation of the Gospel according to the reality of each single country which searches for peace, love and brother/sisterhood that grows with justice.
2. We want that Lutheran youth become adults who, on the basis of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, press forward with social, political, economical, cultural and religious changes.
3. We want to encourage the organization and interlacing of Lutheran youth in Central America.
4. We want to strengthen the independent coordinating team of the Lutheran youth in Central America.

The whole congress should come closer to these goals in small steps. Most of the youth did a god job, but especially those who are already very engaged in their own countries, e.g. taking care of refugees, and thus really feel the distress and long for justice. For them it was important to find out about the background, the influence, or rather, the intervention of the US in Central America in its whole context, to see the significance of the Esquipulas II peace treaty, to be able to embrace their work into this whole complex and let their faith be an answer to this situation.

Those who "stayed out" of this concept do belong to youth groups of the church, but they are not actively engaged and they do not feel the needs in their own countries. In spite of all the cultural and creative parts

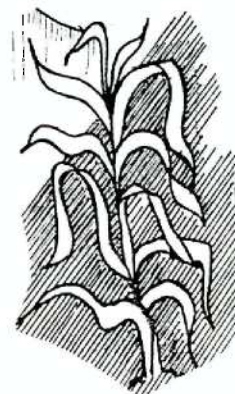
of the meeting, these young people could often not participate actively. One evening a young man from Guatemala told me: "I do not understand all this. They want to change everything, I suppose they are Communists. As a matter of fact everything is all right. My cousin is also a great landowner, but he always helps the poor. They are not so badly off". That there is a civil war in Guatemala, and that shortly before the congress started there were attacks with bombs (June, October, December 1987) and toxic fumes (June 1987) on expelled villages in the northern region, and that because of poverty about 80000 refugees do not dare to return to their homes; of this he knew nothing. He would think that this is a lie. Of course, he cannot be held responsible for his ignorance. The official media conform to this thinking and when he suddenly hears something different he can just put it into the only drawer available: then it's simply "Communist".

In the final summary of the congress this shortcoming in the structure was clearly expressed: the lectures of experts are not useful to all and in certain cases conceal the differences of the youth groups: their different awareness of the situation, their special work in their home countries. However, all agreed that the congress, in spite of all efforts and shortcomings, brought them together. Next time, however, the reports of the different regions should not be brought in the cultural part of the meeting, but should dominate it; workshops and individual initiatives should to some extent replace the lectures. In this way I think that the youth have progressed at a tremendous pace as it is clear that the youth are able to conduct such an international meeting themselves and see what is good or bad for them and try to do something about it.

A joint communion service ended our days together, and most of the participants returned their countries with situations of crisis and war with a new sense of responsibility and also with a new sense of community and courage.

I pray to God for all of these young people and their companions, who really need His blessings and protection. I pray that their love to people, their understanding and courage will grow and mature so that the song that we sang every day will come true:

On earth we are the seed of another Kingdom,
we are witnesses of love: peace for the wars and
light in the shadow: the pilgrimage of the church of God.



In addition to writing the above report, Monika Drewes sent us the following poem by Héctor Miguez:

Let me sing a song of what I believe.
It brings warmth and light like the sun.
Hope of my life and prayer of each day:
The Kingdom of GOD, the Kingdom of GOD.

A new heav'n and earth, a world of true love,
in which death and pain are no more,
no more tears, nor any more crying, there:
The Kingdom of GOD, the Kingdom of GOD.

I believe our liberation will come,
justice on the Day of the Lord.
One family of sisters and brothers:
The Kingdom of GOD, the Kingdom of GOD.

The conqueror shall inherit it then,
says the Lord: "My child you will be".
So we cannot then just sit down and hope,
we must seek for, and struggle and work for
The Kingdom of GOD, the Kingdom of GOD.

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PART II - Laurel Hayes
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(part of report by Laurel Hayes, USA, member of the LWF delegation to the Youth Congress in Guatemala)

CONCLUSIONS of the Central American Lutheran Youth at their second encounter:

1. What do young people think of US intervention in Central America? Its effects and future consequences.

We, the young people of Central America say **NO** to the North American intervention.

For long decades, we have been victims not only of a military interventions, but also intervention of other kinds - economic, ideological and cultural.

We have seen how economic intervention has turned into military and cultural intervention. In this sense, we young people have said NO to every type of intervention.

The reasons we oppose this intervention are because the U.S. maintains and strengthens oligarchic structures in each Central American country and because the U.S. has maintained an agro-exportation system excluding huge segments of the population. Today, those excluded, conscious of the historic threat from the U.S., are making an effort to build free, sovereign and independent people and are leaving behind a marginalizing economic system which 1) does not respond to the interests of the vast majority and 2) abets the flight of national capital and the progressive impoverishment of our people. (1)

We want to make clear that we are not opposed to receiving aid from any country in the world, whenever that aid does not jeopardize our authenticity, values, sovereignty and the right held by every country in the world to decide its own future.

We are young peoples with a shared cultural, religious, political and social background, divided by foreign interests which never allow us to be ourselves.

The search for the solution to our problems should originate in a Latin American perspective where all Third World peoples participate together to achieve social justice and thus to arrive at peace.

2. What is the significance of the Esquipulas II Peace Treaty (Arias Peace Plan) and its future prospects?

- To fully assume the historic challenge of forging a destiny of peace for Central America.
- We commit ourselves to struggle for peace and to eradicate war.
- To make dialogue prevail over violence, and reason over rancor.

- To dedicate these peace efforts to the young people of Central America whose legitimate aspirations for peace and social justice, for freedom and reconciliation, have been frustrated for many generations.
- To make the Central American Parliament a symbol of liberty, independence and reconciliation to which we in Central America aspire. *(see annex)

The points are the following:

- 1) National reconciliation
 - a) dialogue
 - b) amnesty
 - c) a national commission of reconciliation.
- 2) Exhortation to end hostilities.
- 3) Democratization.
- 4) Free elections.
- 5) A halt to aid to irregular forces or to insurrectionary movements.
- 6) No use of territory to attack other states.
- 7) Negotiations regarding security, verification, control and limitation of armaments.
- 8) Refugees and displaced persons.
- 9) Cooperation, democracy and freedom for peace and development.
- 10) Verification and international follow-up.
- 11) Calendar of the execution of commitments.

*(Annex) The prospects we youth see in this peace plan are very gloomy due to the constant intervention of the North American government which negatively affects our eagerness for peace. We also think that our governments lack the necessary political will to carry out this plan due to the shameful subordination into which they have fallen before the North American government.

3. What can young Lutherans do to contribute to peace in Central America?

First of all, we young people of Central America must be aware of the social, cultural, political and economic reality in which we are immersed. Starting from that point, to project ourselves toward the people in general. (2)

To organize ourselves in groups, always working for our rights and for all those basic necessities which are inherent to every human being. In other words, groups which respond to the needs of the people who are the vast majority. (3)

4. How should Christian faith be understood?

We young Christians understand faith as a force which gives us confidence to search for a liberation as much material as spiritual.

In order to obtain this freedom we must act in favor of the basic inalienable needs and rights of every human being.

5. Is poverty God's will?

No, poverty is not God's will, because God provides us with equality; but people themselves have badly distributed wealth, the product of an unjust system.

We as Christians have rights and hence the obligation to struggle for a better world.

6. Why is building peace a challenge for Christians?

The challenge is to struggle against all those systems which support misery, marginalization, violation of our rights; and to be ready to confront whatever obstacle and danger that might hinder the building up of the Realm of God.

7. The importance of ecumenism in the work of building the Realm of God.

To reach the Realm of God it is necessary that we involve ourselves in the building of ecumenism on a local level. (4) The new liberated city that the Realm of God offers to us is reachable when we live in unity of faith, all of us covered by the mantle of the same "Iglesia Popular" (Church of all the people).

From there, we the youth of the Central American Lutheran Church, think opportune the ecumenical union of all churches in pursuit of the same objective - which is to attain the Realm of God.

We cannot give a recipe for the consolidation of this ecumenical unity. We're only saying that the essential criteria of work and unity should be based on national, Latin American and worldwide concrete daily needs.

8. How can I as a Christian avoid tendencies toward sectarianism in my own life?

By not giving priority to any separatist tendency/tendency separated from the Realm of God - this being understood as social justice on earth.

9. How could my local church leave behind sectarian tendencies?

My local church could leave behind sectarian tendencies by everyone working together in order to better our unjust reality without being concerned about different existing creeds.

10. How must Christian faith animate the Central American Christian?

To be in solidarity with the people's priorities (5) and recovery of peoples marginalized by oligarchic anti-Christian structures.

ENDNOTES:

Every translation is to some extent an interpretation. Included in the endnotes are those parts of the conclusions which may be translated

several different ways. The entire Spanish text is available from me upon request. (Laurel Hayes, 255 Fort Washington Avenue No. 24, New York, N.Y. 10032, USA).

- (1) Las razones por las cuales nos oponemos es porque mantienen y fortalecen estructuras oligarquicas de cada pais centroamericano, las bajo un sistema agro-exportador han mantenido un sistema de exclusion de los grandes sectores populares que, hoy, concientes de su reto historico ha forjar se esfuerzan por construir pueblos libres, soberanos e independientes, dejando a un lado un sistema economico marginador que no responde a los intereses de las grandes mayorias. Un sistema economico que conllera la fuga de capitales nacionales y el progresiva empobrecimiento de nuestros pueblos.
- (2) ...los sectores populares.
- (3) Es decir, grupos que respondan a las demandas populares que son en si, la gran mayoria.
- (4) Para alcanzar el Reino de Dios es necesario involucrarnos en la construccion de un proyecto ecumenico popular.
- (5) ...las causas populares...

PART III - by Sturla J. Staalsett, Norway
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(part of report of Sturla Staalsett, member of LWF delegation to the II. Central American Lutheran Youth Congress in Guatemala)

EVALUATION AND PERSONAL COMMENTS

On the last day of the encounter the time had come for conclusions and evaluations. This was first done countrywise in groups, and then the results were presented and discussed in a joint meeting. Most of the participants expressed great satisfaction with the encounter. They felt that it had been inspiring and challenging and that they had learnt a lot from the lectures and the discussion about the Central American situation and the task of young Christians.

There were also some critical comments, as could be expected. The Salvadorian group felt that the next encounter should try to use even more participatory methods. Others lamented that the different groups had not had the opportunity to hear more in detail about the other countries, and how the youth groups of the Lutheran churches in these countries were working. An interchange of ideas and methods was missing: "Maybe the next encounter should be more 'practical', asking each other: **how - with what concrete actions**, can we fulfill our task as Christians to search for a just peace in our society".

A difficulty with a congress like this is the difference in backgrounds, experience and education among the participants. Some of the themes discussed presupposed a knowledge about the Central American society and political situation that a lot of the younger participants did not have. With respect to this, one also has to remember the lack of 'objective' information-sources in the region. For this reason, some of the participants asked that the next encounter also give information and education at a more basic level.

For me, personally, coming from one of the 'old and rich' Lutheran churches, it was a great experience to participate in the encounter in Amatitlan. Getting to know the youth that had come to this meeting was once again to discover the power and the significance of Christian faith in a situation that seems dark and without hope. Many of these young people are elaborating an impressive day-to-day service among the poor, the sick and the homeless in their countries. And doing this, moved by a deep longing for the vision of a just peace for all people that the Bible points out, they are being accused, put in danger and sometimes persecuted. For the, following Jesus means concrete action on behalf of our oppressed sisters and brothers, and this action is costly.

I found that we who want to be followers of Jesus in the rich part of the world, have so much to learn from these young Christians. Their commitment and endurance is an example for us to follow. In this way, young Christians of the Third World also become a hope for our often 'sleepy' churches in Europe.

As one of the participants from Honduras put it: "It is often said that we, the young, are the future. But that's not the truth. We, the young Lutherans of Central America, are here today, and therefore we are the present".

Indeed it is a hopeful sign for the worldwide church that the Lutheran youth of Central America are present, being both 'the present' and 'the future'.

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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN YOUTH NETWORKS GATHER FOR CONSULTATION ON

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HELSINKI PROCESS - by Julius Filo,

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Twenty-one delegates representing international Christian youth networks gathered in Bad Dürkheim, FRG, on March 20-24, 1988 for a consultation on the Helsinki process from the perspective of Christian youth. The main focus of the consultation was youth contacts between East and West.

The consultation, convened by the Ecumenical Youth Council in Europe (EYCE), was the first time that these organizations came together in such a large group to reflect on the Helsinki process. The gathering was an attempt to reflect on the biblical concepts of security and cooperation. It was an opportunity for those involved to critically evaluate the efforts of these organizations in promoting East/West contacts among young people and to suggest possible concrete common actions in support of the process.

Organizations represented at the consultation included the EYCE, the World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), the Conference of European Churches (CEC), International Christian Youth Exchange-Europe, Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)-Europe, Young Christians for Global Justice (YCGJ)-North America, Ecumenical Youth Council in Austria and three delegates of the Lutheran World Federation (one from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan, one from Poland and the coordinator of the LWF Youth Program.

Reports submitted to the meeting by the above organizations, revealed strong interest and growth in East/West contacts through official channels and meetings. The organizations want to use all existing ways of meeting between individuals through private tourism as reportedly used by mission oriented

agencies (e.g. Youth with Mission). But it was stated that the youth groups in the West are often much more interested in contacts with the youth in other Western countries and in the so-called southern countries than with those living in Eastern Europe.

The participants issued a letter to the signatory states of the Helsinki final act expressing their support for the intention of the process. In the letter the participants expressed their hope that the results of the process will be more visible in the future and their concern for the clearer links between the agreements reached in the CSCE process to the issue of global peace and justice.

A larger part of the meeting was dedicated to the youth organizations' concern for a common understanding that "peaceful coexistence in Europe and North America will be true or lasting if it does affect the promotion of fundamental rights, economic and social progress in; and the well being of our sisters and brothers in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Middle East."

Those at the meeting decided to co-operate further on this level and organize exchange of information, addresses of people who could be contacted in different countries and organizations if youth visits would be planned between East and West. They suggested that meetings of this size and importance be held in the future and that a larger youth event, possibly prior to the next CEC Peace and Justice convocation, planned for 1989, be held. The above organizations also expressed their desire to cooperate and contribute to the present ecumenical process of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

INTRODUCTION

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of Marie Nordström, Intern at LWF/DCC Youth Desk

I know that I am privileged to be a Youth Intern at the Youth Desk in the LWF in Geneva. My name is Marie Nordström, I am 27 years old and come from the Church of Sweden. I have studied at the University for Social Studies. I have been involved in the youth movement of our Swedish church for a long time. For my internship at the Lutheran World Federation it is important to have regular contacts to my home church, because it is not only for my own sake that I am here, but my internship should also serve my church.

During my time here I will have the opportunity to learn more about our federation, the body of which my church is one part. I often wonder which faces are behind the people to whose letters I reply and to whom I am sometimes talking on the telephone, and what their lives are like? It is the same when I am receiving Holy Communion. I know that it is a Communion with all people in the world. I am not just sharing the body of Christ together with the people in front of the specific altar, but together with people in India, Brazil and Tanzania. Thinking about this gives me one more dimension of the body of Christ. Have you ever thought about the fact that millions of people are sharing the Holy Communion under different circumstances and situations, and sometimes during the same minute? It is easier to remind oneself of this if there are some names and faces in your mind.

I have known many faces of people from Southern Africa where I have visited and stayed several times. I am herewith sharing something with you, for some maybe well-known but for some unknown, and a little bit about what we are doing in my church in connection to this. From the material attached you will be able to see that I think that the peace and justice for South Africa is an important concern.

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SOUTH AFRICA - LEGAL RACISM

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South Africa is unique. It's the only country in the whole world which has racism written into its constitutional law. Apartheid means racial separation. 23,2 million blacks are oppressed by 4,8 million whites. As a black you must be registered as a "citizen" of one of the areas of South Africa known as "homelands". These are barren, impoverished areas of the country where it's hard to grow anything. When the white population needs your labor you will get permission to be in the white part of the country. You will work in the mills, factories or homes which belong to the whites. Your family will not have permission to follow you, not even during long working periods. The homelands, equaling 13% of the total area of the country, are the poorest parts. That is why many black children die of malnutrition every year. This is in a country which has

one of the highest standards of living in the world among whites. Of course the black people do not have the right to vote.

Racism is not only a question about having different busses, shops or hospitals for white and black people, or that you are not allowed to use your mother tongue. It is a carefully prepared system of social, economic and political life designed to maintain power and privilege in the hands of the white minority. The whole school system is built on separation. Black from white and black from black. Children are taught in school that there are many differences between people, that black people possess a quality which makes them servants. In order to divide the black population tribal conflicts are exaggerated in the history books.

Many black people, often young unemployed boys, are trained by the regime to despise their black brothers who belong to another tribe. They are taken into the military where they are often forced to shoot their own brothers. To the world this gives the impression that there are tribal wars in South Africa and that the whites have a role in the country in maintaining discipline between the tribes.

Today many black people are working as marionettes for the South African regime. Some have quite high positions in the government and fully support the system. Because of this other countries think that the black people have power in South Africa.

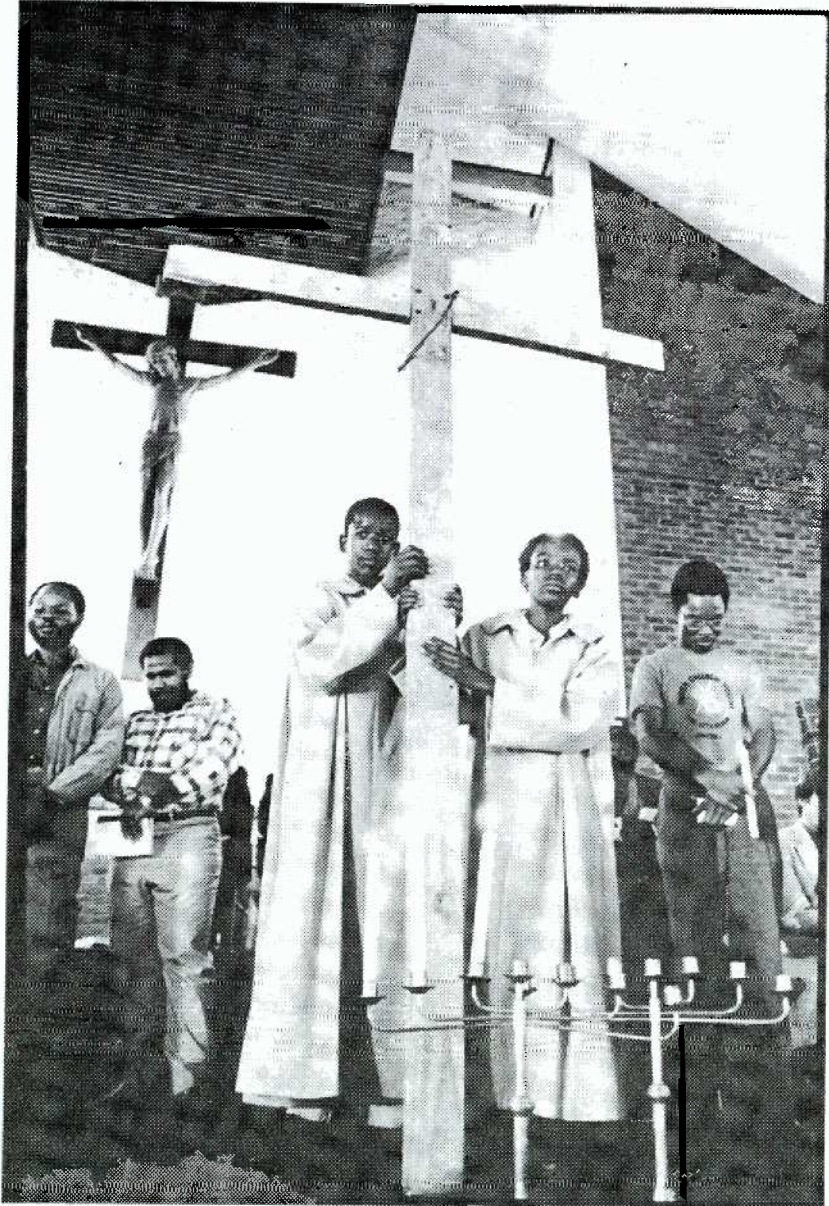
Many white people today are, and have been for years, struggling for justice in the country. There are also white people in prisons because they refuse to do their military service. Therefore, one cannot talk only about the relation between black and white, it is more a question about "to think and act black or white", which is to say, to think and act for justice or injustice.

During military service young men are sometimes recruited or forced to do one part of the service in Namibia, the neighboring country occupied by South Africa. In Namibia, which is Africa's last colony and which continues to be illegally occupied by South Africa, the same law of apartheid exists. South Africa also regularly attacks neighboring countries like e.g. Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique, where the black population has won its freedom from colonial powers, with the same methods as used in South Africa in order to split the population, playing the different ethnic groups off against each other and forcing them to fight their own brothers and sisters in these countries.

On 12th of June 1986 a state of emergency was imposed once again in South Africa. This means that the police have almost unlimited possibilities to arrest whomever they want, whenever they want, without legal proceedings and for as long as they want. During three months after that day 23.000 people were arrested, and of these 40% were children, according to the limited research which is possible in a country with strong censorship and silenced journalists. The resistance has grown during the last years, especially among young people. Young people have nothing to lose, they boycott the schools, bus companies and shops. They organize themselves into different movements. The trade unions also play an important role in the struggle today. People mobilize those who have not been active in the struggle before.

The situation has now become very urgent. Every week it becomes harder for everybody. The commitment to the struggle for liberation, for both

black and white, can be very costly. But the apartheid system in South Africa is highly controlled and strong and insensitive to the voices of people. Money is more important to the white government.



Service in Regina Mundi, Soweto in protest of the banning of 18 organization

At the end of February this year 18 organizations were banned in South Africa. Among these are the UDF (United Democratic Front), an umbrella organization which gathers about 600 anti-apartheid organizations, trade unions, youth organizations and a support group for political prisoners, and the CDD (The Committee of Democratic Defense) which was established by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev. Allan Boesak. By so doing, the regime just encourages more tension.

After 30 years of non-violent attempts to seek change, including the use of discussions, resolutions and petitions, the African National Congress (ANC), the major liberation movement, now uses force in direct attacks against selected targets. At the same time the ANC continues to support every non-violent measure, e.g. sanctions, which might bring peaceful change to South Africa. Many leaders of the resistance are now in prison and silenced. Others are in exile.

"Our country is raped, and still the world tells us not to be violent", one delegate from South Africa said in a youth gathering in Zimbabwe 1986, arranged by the World Council of Churches. "When your brother is tortured in prison, your children are dying of starvation and you are forced to escape from house to house every night, you don't want to hear the judgment from other parts of the world. We do not need any reforms. What we need today is a complete political upheaval. It is not a question of playing football together with white youth or to get married with each other. It is about the right to exist", the South African youth said.

Children and teenagers play an important role in the struggle today. They encourage their parents to also join the struggle. They organize acts of protest and resistance. They are the ones being tortured in prisons. They are the ones pushing the struggle further. Unprotected, innocent children have been brutally shot by the regime. This is the daily life in many places in South Africa and Namibia today in the struggle for a just society built on shared power by both black and white.

There are young people awaiting execution, most of them in horrible condition after having been tortured. Electric shock, psychical torture and suffocations are used in detention. The world will never know about the most horrible things which happen in detention because the witnesses are already silenced. It would still be possible to save some of these young people if the world would react against this kind of treatment.

OUR TASK:

"Every South African product bought is another stone in the wall which secures our existence", the former South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, once said.

Already in 1960 the leader of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, appealed to the whole world for an economic boycott of South Africa. The same year ANC was banned and Nelson Mandela was put into prison. Today, 70 years old, he is still in the prison of Robben Island.

All companies in South Africa, whether national or owned by foreign countries, are dependent on the apartheid policy. Cheap labor and badly organized labor unions enable an easy profit. The foreign companies in South Africa support the system in many ways. When their white employees do their military service the company pays most of their salary. All companies in the country have to pay taxes to the government, of which about 25% goes to the military and to other parts of the machinery of oppression.

The situation is full of contradictions, e.g. a foreign country might support teachers working in development in South Africa and, at the same time, this same country might maintain companies which, directly or

indirectly, support the South African military force. Maybe one day the army will bomb the school were these teachers work!

The wish of the black people is that the world would help them to isolate South Africa, to attack the country economically, and to show their disapproval of the system. A majority of black people today support sanctions; 67% of the population according to the Community Agency for Social Enquiry in South Africa. Sanctions are encouraged in conferences and meetings all over the world. However, South African newspapers often warn people not to encourage sanctions. Those who do so anyway are prosecuted under the State of Emergency and are silenced. Sanctions are one of the weapons that the racist regime would understand. But how would sanctions affect the black population? Some would of course lose their jobs. The blacks are prepared for whatever consequences these sanctions would entail. Their answer would be: "It is not a question of our jobs, it is a question of our lives". Many people are already losing their jobs if they are not already unemployed. The United Nations has for many years urged sanctions against South Africa, but the USA, Great Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany are acting against their general imposition.

Sometimes it is difficult to know which products are produced in South Africa. The regime is trying to avoid sanctions by exporting their products in the name of e.g. Swaziland or Israel. I am sure, however, that a decrease in the economy, together with other actions, at last will convince South Africa that the apartheid system is too expensive.

The things you can do are different from country to country. Sweden for example, where I come from, started a boycott of products from South Africa on a very local and personal level already during the 60's. This increased during the years through pressure on organizations, and through them pressure on the government. On July 1, 1987, the Swedish Government issued a new law which does not allow export and import to South Africa. This law, however, does not yet cover everything.



SHELL - "OILING THE APARTHEID SYSTEM"

Oil is the only strategic raw material that South Africa does not have in the country. They have to import 75% of their needs. Since 1978 the United Nations has strongly encouraged an oil embargo against South Africa. Among the supporting countries are the petroleum exporting countries. Without oil the regime would very soon lose its power. Oil helps to keep the military system running and to oppress the black majority.

The SHELL company supplies oil to the police and military. SHELL extracts strategic metals and makes important chemicals which help South Africa to be independent of import. SHELL is also mining coal in South Africa which gives South Africa its necessary foreign currency through the export.

Today people all over the world are working for a boycott against SHELL. The boycott is supported by trade unions, municipalities, churches and other institutions. It is especially important to campaign for

boycotting such large consumers. The campaign has already had an impact on SHELL, for example, causing losses of market shares in various countries. SHELL management has presently engaged a special advertising agency to try to overcome the boycott.

THE CHURCH OF SWEDEN YOUTH

Through a struggle by the YOUTH in the Church of Sweden, the Church has decided to endorse the boycott against SHELL. The church support applies specifically to a boycott of SHELL products by bulk consumers such as public companies, municipalities, churches and trade unions. Youth organization in Sweden have studied the Southern African situation for years, both on the local and national levels. We also have youth from South Africa staying in our country, helping us in the process of solidarity work and the development of spirituality.

THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

At its Assembly in Tanzania in 1977 the LWF passed an historic resolution which said in effect that a person could be a Lutheran or a supporter of the apartheid system, but one could not be both. They are mutually exclusive. At the last General Assembly in 1984 in Budapest, the membership of two LWF member churches was suspended, one in South Africa and one in Namibia, because of their de facto support of social separation in the church and in society. This painful experience meant a beginning of a difficult dialogue with these and other churches in the region to establish unity across lines of color. It also initiated a period of critical self-examination by Lutheran churches around the world to determine if racist practices were tolerated in the congregations and hierarchies. In 1986, the federation removed its bank accounts from banks which have clear links with South Africa. LWF supports sanctions as one of the last remaining options to bring about peaceful change. It also supports participation in conferences on the above issue and cooperation with other Christian organizations to achieve a just society in South Africa.

"The Kairos Document", a theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa written in 1985 by theologians in South Africa, can be ordered from our office.

This is just a brief introduction to the South African subject, and some examples on steps taken in the direction of freedom. There is much more to be said about this subject. We must take it as our own responsibility to learn more about these things, and tell others about what we have discovered. If we do so I am sure that we will be welcome to the new independent country of South Africa.

Marie Nordström

SPIRITUALITY AND STRUGGLE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

by Edwin Arrison, South Africa

(the following is the final part of a contribution sent to the Youth Newsletter)

The situation in South Africa gives us every reason to despair and become hopeless and cynical about the possibility of change. And very legitimately so! If one looks at the situation where you have a powerful military force on the one hand and a powerless and almost defenseless majority on the other, and where the one side is prepared to cling to power at all cost (and of course with Western support), you have every reason to despair.

But as Christians we are called to be prophets of hope. We should say to oppressors that they are not God and that they will bite the dust like all the Pharaohs before them (in the words of Bishop Tutu). We should not fear, because "there is no fear in love". If we truly love justice, peace, truth and goodness, we should not fear but say to oppressors that "we must obey God, not people".

But these (very brave) things we can only do if we are filled with God's spirit. Our own strength is not enough. If we rely only on ourselves and the strength of others and we ignore God, we are bound to become cynical and hopeless. We need to develop a spirituality of liberation, one that propels us into the world to do good, not a spirituality that paralyzes us and that leaves everything to God. No: we are God's ambassadors and we should do what he (or she) commands us to do. This type of spirituality can only come from a disciplined life of prayer, meditation and reflection on God's Word.

I wish to quote to you from the KAIROS document which was produced in South Africa in 1985 and which was presented as a "challenge to the church". (KAIROS is a Greek word meaning the designation of a special moment of time when God visits his/her people to offer them a unique opportunity for

repentance and conversion, for change and decisive action. It is a time of judgment. It is a moment of truth, a crisis.)

"The answer (for the churches' state of near paralysis when faced with the crisis in South Africa) must be sought in the type of faith and spirituality that has dominated church life for centuries. As we all know, spirituality has tended to be an other-worldly affair that has very little, if anything at all, to do with the affairs of this world. Social and political matters were seen as worldly affairs that have nothing to do with the spiritual concerns of the church. Moreover, spirituality has also been understood to be purely private and individualistic. Public affairs and social problems were thought to be beyond the sphere of spirituality. And finally the spirituality we inherit tends to rely upon God to intervene in God's own good time to put right what is wrong in the world. That leaves very little for human beings to do except to pray for God's intervention. It is precisely this kind of spirituality that, when faced with the present crisis in South Africa, leaves so many Christians and church leaders in a state of near paralysis.

It hardly needs saying that this kind of faith and spirituality has no Biblical foundation. The Bible does not separate the human person from the world in which he or she lives; it does not separate the individual from the social or one's private life from one's public life. God redeems the whole person as part of God's whole creation (Romans 8:18-24). A truly biblical spirituality would penetrate into every aspect of human existence and would exclude nothing from God's redemptive will. Biblical faith is prophetically relevant to everything that happens in the world".

THE YOUTH WORK IN AFRICA - AN INSTRUMENT OF GOD'S MISSION

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was the theme of a first all African Lutheran Youth Leaders Conference which was held in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe on May 10-21, 1988. The conference was part of the LWF Youth and Students Program overseen by the Youth Desk. This activity was only possible because of the strong commitment of the youth and leadership of the hosting church - the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. The conference was thematically prepared by a preparatory group composed of three members who met in conjunction with the Asian Lutheran Youth Gathering in Jerusalem in August 1987.

There were all together 54 participants, including 37 delegates of LWF member churches (15 from Africa and 4 from other regions), lecturers, guests from the hosting church and liberation movements (South West African Peoples Organization-SWAPO, African National Congress-ANC) representatives of their religious departments.

Prior to the conference about 2/3 of the delegates from African countries and delegates representing other regions of the LWF participated in a visitation program. Four smaller groups visited different parts of Zimbabwe (the Manama mission stations and four nearby parishes; Chegato and surrounding congregations - both typical rural settings; Beit Bridge; Harare and parishes on the way to Bulawayo). Another larger group (9 persons) visited Malawi, the youngest member church of the LWF:

Participants in the visitation programs were faced with many joys, hopes and challenges in the congregations they visited and with their youth. It was a faith-strengthening experience to participate in meetings full of beautiful singing, praying and witnessing to the faith in Jesus Christ, giving an eternal life perspective and enabling changes in life today. Among all the positive experiences, was the fact that Lutheran churches in the world have shown their togetherness with the countries visited. The signs of this are the water dams, graining mills, facilities of the congregations built in the "Food for work project" in Zimbabwe, water pumps, scholarships... LWF is therefore well-known among the rural population, and expectations of further assistance were also expressed to the visitors.

The greatest challenge, as expressed by the youth visited, on the level of youth involvement in the church was a need for more youth leadership training programs, counseling to the youth by older members of the congregations, e.g. on premarital problems, problems with transportation between congregations belonging to one parish. On the social level, youth were often speaking about their longing for more scholarships to enable them to continue their studies (after elementary and secondary schools which exist in the rural areas), and a need for more vocational training schools which would give practical skills for their life in the rural setting and a possibility to create their own occupation and not to depend on an employment which is not easy to get.

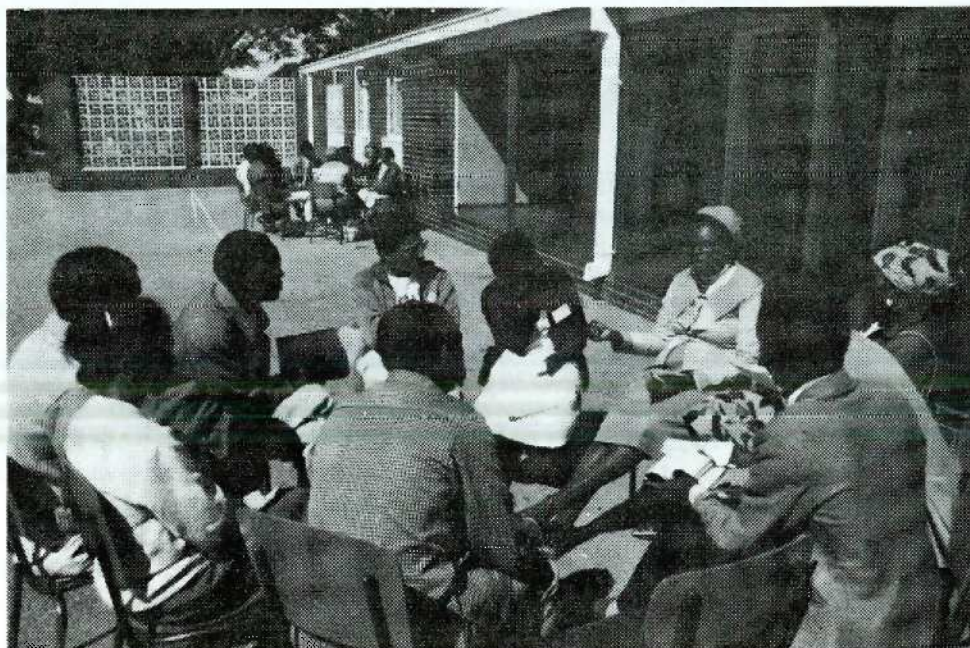
The conference itself started by a very interesting and engaging opening worship prepared by the hosting church with lots of singing and a fantastic atmosphere. The Very Rev. Dean L.M. Dube, Deputy Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe, spoke on Mark 9,14-29 and stressed that youth expect a lot from the churches in Africa. Young people approach the pastors and expect miracles and are then disappointed if they do not

immediately happen. He said that we forget that beyond the church there is our Master, Lord Jesus Christ. We have to see him as a part of the church. During this challenging message it was at the same time clear that youth, being part of the church, should not only expect the church to do something for the young generation, but be part of the process leading to a solution.

There were many valuable contributions prepared and presented at the meeting. The reports of the youth work of the LWF member churches in Africa have clearly shown that the emphasis of the youth work is and will be the spreading of faith in Jesus Christ, deepening of the commitment to the Gospel, church, worship and ethical values. The limits in the present ability to approach some of the socio-political issues were also visible in some of the churches on the level of youth work. But the focus on evangelistic work was definitely understood as the indispensable beginning and a permanent component of the conscientization of youth towards the values of life.



Each day after the Bible study "family groups" discussed the Bible text



There were several contributions prepared as introduction to discussions on the subthemes of the conference: Rev. S.C. Ndlovu, Zimbabwe: "Ways of witness to the Gospel in African Lutheran churches"; Mr. Jesse Lutabingwa, Tanzania: "The church and economic development in Africa"; Dr. Musimbi Kanyoro, Kenya (presently LWF women secretary): "Church and state - vision of the churches for a just society"; Rev. Lukas Natanga, Namibia (presently SWAPO chaplain based in Zambia): "Struggle for human rights - an international issue". Case studies to the main contributions were prepared by the participants and presented in the plenary.

The bulk of the discussions took place in working groups which were to identify the role of youth regarding the topics presented in three different settings: 1) in the situation of struggle against apartheid (a decisive dimension of the situation in Southern Africa); 2) in the situation of a country seeking independence and 3) in a free African country.

The summary of the work is presented in the Final Document of the conference which is published in its complete version on the following pages. (We plan to compile the most important contributions and results of the conference in the form of a report to be offered to the youth and youth leaders not only in Africa but also to interested youth in other regions. You can already indicate your interest in such a document to our Youth Desk in Geneva).



All important reports and final discussions took place in the plenary

FINAL STATEMENT

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All African Lutheran Youth Leaders Conference, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe,
May 10-21, 1988

The first All African Youth Leaders Conference of the Lutheran churches in Africa was held in Bulawayo, in the Republic of Zimbabwe, from the 10th to 21st of May 1988. The venue of the conference was the Njube Youth Center of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. It was at this center that youth leaders from 15 churches, drawn from 12 African countries, joined by their counterparts from South America, Western Europe, Eastern Europe and Asia, met to discuss various dimension of the mission of the churches in Africa. Religious representatives of the liberation movements SWAPO and ANC were also present.

The conference was organized and sponsored by the Lutheran World Federation's Youth and Students Program and hosted by the youth of Zimbabwe under the auspices of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe. The conference has also drawn resource persons and lecturers who presented topics and suggestions during the conference. Centering their discussions under the theme of "Youth Work in Africa - an Instrument of God's Mission", the youth leaders from Africa and guests from other regions heard reports about the youth work of the churches present and based their talks on the morning devotional messages, lectures and case studies. In order to make the working groups more efficient, the youth leaders divided themselves into three working groups, which looked at the youth leaders' church involvement in the contexts of struggle against apartheid, struggle for independence in an independent African society. During the conference, the youth also received reports of those who took part in the pre-conference visitation programs to Malawi and Zimbabwe.

It must also be sited here that apart from the steering committee of the conference, another important sub-committee was formed to look into the preparations and issues that should be dealt with at the 1990 Pre-Assembly Youth Gathering of the Lutheran World Federation in Brazil and what would be required of the African youth at the Assembly.

While in Zimbabwe, the youth also visited places of interest, including the Matopos National Park and the Great Zimbabwe ruins.

We, the African Lutheran Youth Leaders conference, resolved

- 1) having discussed all issues concerned, and realizing the need for regular exchange of information between the African Lutheran churches, youth work and mutual support which has started successfully in our conference, we propose to the LWF Youth Desk to secure funds for
 - i) a part-time youth coordinator (upper age limit of 35) in Africa from any chosen country, of the national leaders whose task would be

- to assist in the development of plans for sub-regional and regional activities in Africa, through regional youth committee;
 - secure regular exchange of information with the youth leaders of other African countries and with the LWF youth desk, e.g. for Youth Newsletter;
- ii) a regional youth coordinating committee (upper age limit of 35) which should meet regularly (next meetings within the next two years) and whose members will be assigned by the following churches for a two year period: Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe;
- iii) a program of sub-regional and regional activities (possibly planned for three years) as developed by the coordinating committee.

The following sub-regions have been identified: The West African sub-region - Liberia, Cameroon, Nigeria, Zaire, The Central African Republic.

The East African sub-region - Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Madagascar.

The Southern African sub-region - South Africa, Swaziland, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Botswana.

- 2) that the church encourage and promote
 - non-formal and vocational education especially in rural settings
 - income generating projects biased towards the rural areas
 - and secure stable markets for the products of the relevant projects.
- 3) that the church affirm the use of spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12, 1-11) and increase educational programs that relate to them.
- 4) that the church promote sex education and premarital counseling to its youth through open discussions and visual aids.
- 5) that the church should encourage communication between parents and children in order to bridge the generation gap between them.
- 6) the church must fill in the gap left by breakdown in culture but at the same time discourage cultural aspects against Christian ethics, e.g. female circumcision and forced marriages.
- 7) We affirm 40% representation of women in all general, local and international conferences and church activities and also recommend at least 20% representation of youth under the age of 35.

We should also conscientize both men and women to change their negative attitude on the participation of women.

- 8) Whereas the popular definition of development is based on an economic growth model, we in Africa must ensure that the framework of economic and social justice is a participatory and sustainable society. The present situation in Africa includes under-development and poverty due to socio-economic and political injustices,

exploitation, debt crisis, political oppression, apartheid and others. Therefore given the present realities in Africa, we recommend that:

- i) the church should, in pursuing development, establish the root causes of under-development through a critical social analysis;
 - ii) development education should be given high priority in the church programs;
 - iii) programs geared towards creating critical awareness through a process of conscientization should be established;
 - iv) the African countries development programs, including the church, should be people oriented.
- 9) The prophetic role of the church is to identify with the oppressed, to give hope to the discouraged and to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. Whereas the Scriptures have a clear outline of how this has been done by Old Testament prophets, Jesus Christ and his followers, we realize that the church in Africa has not always been prophetic enough in its mission. We therefore recommend that the church in general and the youth in particular:
- i) take more concrete action towards the situation in Africa. This entails the re-examination of the church theology regarding the relationship between church and state;
 - ii) should take courage in initiating dialogue with the state leadership on matters that concern the welfare of the society, especially advocacy for the voiceless;
 - iii) should address herself to the issue of corruption in Africa, especially tribalism, theft and mismanagement of natural resources and that such examination should start within the church;
 - iv) should re-examine the church and the national structure and policies which are contributing to the widening gap between the extremely rich and extremely poor people.
- 10) We call upon all member churches to establish human rights groups within the church in consultation with the LWF human rights desk.
- 11) We encourage LWF to continue support to the liberation movements in Southern Africa especially in the form of scholarships.
- 12) We affirm our support for economic sanctions against South Africa as contained in item 4 under the subheading "The Challenge" contained in the Lusaka Statement, which reads: "We urgently call upon the churches in countries which, through economic and political cooperation with South Africa and Namibia, support the apartheid regime, to exert increased pressure upon their governments to implement sanctions, and upon banks, corporations and trading institutions to withdraw from doing business with South Africa and Namibia. We especially call upon the international community not to

engage in newly devised deceptive forms of disinvestment which maintain the status quo, but instead to apply immediate and comprehensive sanctions to South Africa and Namibia."

- 13) We call on all LWF member churches to organize an anti-apartheid week annually on the same dates with activities from youth, women's groups and any other groups portraying the evils of apartheid. The week must have a special program planned by LWF including intercessions for those in detention, children, liberation movements and Christians in South Africa. The week must coincide with the commemoration of either of the following: the Soweto massacre; the Sharpsville massacre or the Kassinga massacre. Fund raising can also be carried out here and the proceeds sent to liberation movements.
- 14) All churches must involve the masses and encourage mass participation in the support of liberation movements and the creation of a just society in South Africa and Namibia through dissemination of information on apartheid by the use of video tapes, seminars or conferences with themes on apartheid; and establishing contacts with other anti-apartheid groups in order to know how they work. The churches may use LWF resources and resource persons such as those responsible for liberation theology.
- 15) We further request member churches to form anti-apartheid groups of local youth or we, the youth leaders, can lead in the formation of such groups in our colleges, schools or such other institutions.
- 16) We encourage youth of the LWF member church in South Africa and Namibia to look for ways of creating contacts with youth of the suspended Lutheran churches in the above countries. Such an effort of the youth would promote the re-establishment of the disturbed fellowship with these churches within the LWF. We propose this and pray for the youth of Lutheran churches in the above countries as we believe in the healing power of the Holy Spirit in the communion of Christians overcoming all sins which divide.

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NEWS IN BRIEF - from the life of the youth in the world

BUNDESREPUBLIK DEUTSCHLAND (epd)

Kirchliche Begegnungsreisen nach Polen, Rumänien, Bulgarien und in die UdSSR bietet der Evangelische Jugenddienst für Ost-West-Begegnung e.V. (EJD) in Göttingen in diesem Jahr an. Sie geben nach Angaben des EJD Gelegenheit, in kleinen Gruppen Kirchen und Länder Osteuropas kennenzulernen. Darüber hinaus vermittelt der EJD ein- bis mehrwöchige Studienaufenthalte in der DDR, die dem Kennenlernen des kirchlichen und allgemeinen Lebens dort dienen sollen. Dieses Angebot richtet sich an alle, die sich an Begegnungen von Menschen aus Ost und West aktiv beteiligen möchten, um so auf Verstehen und Verständigung hinzuarbeiten, erklärt der EJD dazu. Das Jahresprogramm ist erhältlich beim Evangelischen Jugenddienst für Ost-West-Begegnung, Friedrich-Naumann-Strasse 66, D-3400 Göttingen, Tel. 0551/64123.

CHINA (China Talk, Vol. XII)

Young people in China today want to express their talents, aspirations, enterprise and creativity. As living standards improve, they are no longer satisfied with working, eating and sleeping. Many young people are enthusiastic about education. They also want more material comfort and cultural enjoyment.

The Chinese census of 1982 shows that there are over 243 million young people between the ages of 14 and 25, the Chinese government's classification for youth, in the People's Republic of China. This is almost a quarter of China's entire population. It is also approximately equivalent to the entire population of the United States or the Soviet Union. About one in every 20 people in the world is a Chinese youth.

Openness to the outside world has given young people a glimpse of other countries and a new standard for evaluating their own circumstances. Social liberalization has changed the way they dress and interact one with another. Surveys show that many young people are passionate about the arts. They dominate music classes in guitar, piano, accordion playing and singing.



DEUTSCHE DEMOKRATISCHE REPUBLIK (epd)

Die kirchliche Jugendarbeit mit Randgruppen in der DDR stösst sowohl bei staatlichen Behörden als auch innerhalb der evangelischen Kirche auf Kritik. Nach Ansicht des mecklenburgischen Landesjugendpastors Georg Heydenreich müsse die Kirche jedoch randständigen Jugendlichen weiterhin Hilfe anbieten. In einem Interview, das die in Schwerin erscheinende "Mecklenburgische Kirchenzeitung" in Januar veröffentlichte, verteidigte der Pastor die "Offene Jugendarbeit". Sie sei "Hilfe für Menschen am Rand von Kirche und Gesellschaft". Seit einigen Jahren bieten evangelische Gemeinden Treffpunkte etwa für sogenannte Punks oder auch alkoholgefährdete Jugendliche an. Auch wenn dieser Arbeitszweig, so Heydenreich, "viele Probleme mit sich bringt", sei die Kirche dazu herausgefordert, zu den Menschen zu stehen, die Hilfe bräuchten.

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GUYANA

We have received the following message from a young person who would like to correspond with other youth:

"My name is Liloutie Ramdial and I have two sisters and seven brothers. I am born on the 25th of July 1968. I am a member of the Lutheran Church in Enterprise, Guyana. My hobbies are: reading God's word, corresponding with my fellow Christians and music.

Address: 212 Forbes Street, Enterprise, East Coast Demerara, Guyana

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ITALIEN (kipa, Dez. 1987)

Rom. 30. Dezember -- Papst Johannes Paul II. hat gemeinsam mit 24.000 Jugendlichen aus West- und Osteuropa zum Jahresende für den Frieden in der Welt und die Einheit aller Christen gebetet. Die Gebetswache mit dem Papst am Mittwochabend im Petersdom war der Höhepunkt des dritten in Rom organisierten Europatreffens der ökumenischen Mönchsgemeinschaft Taizé. Von 29. Dezember bis 2. Januar sind 24.000 Jugendliche auf Einladung des Priors der Brudergemeinschaft Taizé, Roger Schutz, in die Ewige Stadt gekommen, darunter 1000 Ungarn, 800 Polen und 3300 Jugoslawen.

Die mittlerweile in der ganzen Welt bekannten Taizé-Treffen locken Tausende von Jugendliche an, die durch gemeinsames Gebet und Meditation Kraft suchen, um den Alltag zu bewältigen.

In seiner Ansprache bei der Gebetswache im Petersdom versicherte der Papst den Jugendlichen, dass er ihre Besorgnis über die Zukunft der Menschheit und über ihre eigene Zukunft, über das Fehlen einer vollen Gemeinschaft der Christen im Glauben sowie über die Verletzung der Menschenrechte, vor allem der Religionsfreiheit in vielen Ländern der Welt, teile. "Auch bin ich ständig beunruhigt über die tausenden von

Menschen, die aufgrund von Hungersnot oder bewaffneten Konflikten zwischen den Nationen leiden oder sterben", erklärte der Papst.

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NAMIBIA (lwi)

Windhoek, Namibia, May 5 -- Church sources in Namibia report that two teachers and three students are in South African custody after a Defense Force operation designed to blame the SWAPO liberation movement for child abduction went awry.

On April 19, a detachment of the SADF (South African Defense Force) stopped close to Eengendjo Secondary School in northern Namibia. During the night soldiers, dressed as SWAPO guerillas, abducted several students over the border into Angola. Near the boarder, they stopped to sleep and during the night a number of the boys slipped away. In the morning, the "guerillas" abandoned the rest of the students. Before dawn on April 20, SADF troops surrounded the Eengendjo school campus and demanded to know why teachers had not reported the "SWAPO kidnapping" that had occurred during the night. Since no alarm had sounded, the whole episode was known only to the SADF.

Two teachers were arrested and later three students, who had by then returned to the school, were also detained. Church sources report that the detained students and teachers were coerced into signing statements that children had been kidnapped by SWAPO, but when brought to a government-controlled radio station to broadcast these allegations, they refused to speak. All five are being held at Oshakati, the principal base of South Africa's occupation forces in northern Namibia. Church sources say that if all had gone according to plan, South Africa would have used the false kidnapping to stress the importance of having school children "protected" by occupation forces. Newspapers in Namibia that support South Africa's presence have printed the defense force version of the abduction without interviewing any of the teachers or students. (Namibia Communications Center, London)

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SWEDEN

During the first week of November 1987 a Swedish group of 40 young people from the Church of Sweden spent some days in Geneva to study different international organizations. This study trip was part of a project called "Young in the world wide church". This is a joint project of the two youth movements (Church of Sweden Youth and Ansgarsförbundet) and other parts of the church dealing with international questions (Lutherhjälpen, Church of Sweden Mission, Church of Sweden Abroad, the Department for Interchurch and Ecumenical Relations and the Educational Association of Christians in Sweden). The aim of this project is to make young people in the church interested and more active in international work.

In addition to visits to the World Council of Churches and the Lutheran World Federation, where they had a general introduction to the work of different departments and units, the group also visited the International

Peace Bureau, High Commissioner for Refugees (UN), Women International League for Peace and Freedom, UNICEF, and the Swedish permanent mission of the UN. They also spent one evening at the Ecumenical Institute of Bossey.

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USA (lwi)

Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 5 (elca) -- Less than three weeks after registration opened, 21,000 young people and adult counselors had registered for the national youth gathering of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). That is maximum capacity for the event scheduled to be held in San Antonio, Texas, July 31 - August 4. "Rejoice in the Lord Always" is the theme for the gathering. It is the first national gathering of young people in the ELCA, which officially began operations as a new church January 1.

Mass meetings will be held in the San Antonio Convention Center Complex and Alamo Stadium. About 75 workshops and forums will be presented on such topics as chemical dependence, friendship, cults, death and dying, public speaking, South Africa and world peace. A resource fair will include displays from colleges, church agencies and institutions and local congregations. At an interaction center, individuals and groups attending the gathering will have the opportunity to give music, drama, dance, mime and clown performances. The new Lutheran Youth Organization of the ELCA will hold its national convention as part of the gathering.

Prior to the youth gathering, a Multicultural Youth Leadership Event with the theme "Come On Everybody, Rejoice," will be held at Texas Lutheran College, Seguin, near San Antonio. Five hundred youth of color or whose primary language is not English and white youth from multicultural congregations are expected to participate in that event as well as the national gathering.

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YOUTH NEWSLETTER ADDRESS UPDATE:
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NAME:.....

Old address:.....

.....



1. I have a **CHANGE OF ADDRESS**: My new address is:

.....

.....

.....(Please write legible, otherwise we cannot send the Youth Newsletter to you!)



2. Please **DISCONTINUE** sending the Youth Newsletter to me



3. Please **ADD** the following people to your mailing list:
(Use separate sheet if necessary)

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

PLEASE RETURN TO: LWF/Youth Desk, P.O. Box 66, Route de Ferney 150,
1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland